

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment (Investigation)	Effective Date: July 1, 2007
	Section 10: Interviewing the Parent/Guardian/Custodian	Version: 1

POLICY [NEW]
OLD POLICY: N/A

- The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will conduct a face-to-face interview with the parent(s)/guardian(s)/custodian(s) of an alleged victim of CA/N, unless one or both cannot be located or refuse an interview.
- The interview will take place on the same day as the interview with the alleged child victim, unless not possible.

Code References

- [IC 31-33-8-7 Scope of investigation by department of child services; order for access to home, school, or other place, or for mental or physical examinations](#)
- [IC 31-33-18-4 Notice to parent, guardian, or custodian of availability of reports, information, and juvenile court records; release form; copying costs](#)

PROCEDURE [NEW]

If the parent/guardian/custodian is the alleged perpetrator, the FCM will:

- Follow all procedures contained in separate policy, [Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#).

If the parent/guardian/custodian is **not** the alleged perpetrator, the FCM will:

- Secure identifying information and request (not require) the individual's social security number.
- State the reason for the interview.
- Allow the parent/guardian/custodian to respond to each allegation.
- Allow the parent/guardian/custodian to "tell his/her side of the story"
- Focus the interview on the safety of the child.
- Look for any indications of child abuse/neglect and ask questions related to any indications that are present.
- Observe the interactions between the parent/guardian/custodian and other family members, including the child.
- Assess whether the parent/guardian/custodian may be a victim of domestic violence.
- Obtain the names of other family members and/or collateral contacts who may be able to provide additional information relating to the alleged CA/N.
- Discuss any stress factors that may be present.
- Review with the parent/guardian/custodian what has been discussed during the interview to verify comprehension.
- Explain that the assessment (investigation) is not complete, and explain what will happen next and how he/she will be informed of results of the assessment (investigation).
- Provide the parent/guardian/custodian with a copy of the form, [Notice of Availability of Completed Reports and Information](#).

RELATED INFORMATION

Successful Interviews

Plan to interview the person in a place that is private and where there will be no interruptions. This may help to reduce the person's anxiety. The FCM should explain the allegations and the potential outcomes. Although the assessment (investigation) is incomplete, the parent/guardian/custodian has a right to know, within the limits of confidentiality, what has happened and what has been determined thus far. If the parent signs a release of information form, other non-offending adults in the household may be informed of the outcome in order to assist with protecting the child. **[NEW] If the parent utilizes this option, the FCM must document thoroughly in the assessment (investigation) notes.** Full disclosure will also help develop a beginning level of trust and enhance the likelihood that the person will cooperate with the agency.

Social Security Numbers

The FCM should request the social security number, but he/she cannot legally demand/require the disclosure of this information.

Domestic Violence

If at any point during the assessment (investigation) the FCM learns that a parent/guardian/custodian may be a victim of domestic violence, the FCM should provide that person with information about community services that are available to domestic violence victims. Questions about domestic violence should be asked only in one-on-one interviews.

Resources for Domestic Violence:

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Crisis Line: 1-800-332-7385, www.violenceresource.org

Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault
1-800-691-2272, www.incasa.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224, www.ncadv.org

Parent/Guardian/Custodian is Alleged CA/N Perpetrator

If the parent/guardian/custodian is the alleged perpetrator, that person should be interviewed in accordance with the policy, [Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#). Additionally, if more than one parent/guardian/custodian is being interviewed and one is identified as the alleged perpetrator, the interviews should be conducted separately.

Interviewing Non-custodial Parents

FCMs should attempt to locate and interview non-custodial parents. See separate policy, Chapter 5: [Non-Custodial Parents](#).

FORMS AND TOOLS

- [Notice of Availability of Completed Reports and Information \(SF 48201\)](#)
- [Notice of Availability of Completed Reports and Information \(SF 51886\) \(Spanish\)](#)